

# Senate Bill 725 / House Bill 5334

## Information for decision-makers

Senate Bill 725 and House Bill 5334, as introduced, states: *if a landfill operating license designates the landfill as a landfill energy production facility, yard clippings may be disposed of at the landfill in landfill cells served by a landfill gas collection system for the purpose of furthering energy production.*

### ***Key points of the legislation:***

- The legislation is a request for an exemption, NOT a repeal of the existing yard waste ban.
- Such a policy change will offer all of us (communities, individuals, and landfills) a **choice** for management of yard waste materials—providing an outcome of either dirt or power.
- The language provides specific criteria for the exemption to apply.
  - An operable gas collection system in place **before** yard waste can be accepted
  - A move from no reported collection efficiency to a reasonable stretch of 70% (the result being a net reduction of emissions)
  - A required productive end use and annual reporting

### ***Environmental benefits:***

- The benefits of landfill gas projects are real. Every three megawatts equals enough energy to power 1,900 average sized homes. Additionally, landfill gas is considered base load power. Energy from landfill gas is available for a long time—20 to 30 years post closure.
- There are currently 49 active municipal solid waste landfills in the state; more than 20 now operate landfill gas projects and at least 10 more could be developed. In 2007, it was estimated that these projects supplied about 80 megawatts of energy.
- If all landfill gas projects were fully developed and an exemption for yard waste allowed, the energy production from landfills could increase to about 300 megawatts (approximately equivalent to the power output of a medium size coal plant).

### ***Economic benefit:***

- Illustrating the potential economic impact for municipalities is the Orchard Lake community. In their last bid request they asked for alternate pricing based on mixing yard waste and trash for landfill disposal. The response to this request was a price \$4.80 less per home each year.
- In the mid-Michigan area where homeowners have subscription choice, individuals could opt to discontinue segregated collection for yard clippings to realize savings of more than \$100 per year.

### ***Public opinion:***

Six hundred Michigan voters were asked their opinion on the value of dirt or power from yard clippings. The survey, conducted in March of 2008, was administered by Lansing-based Denno Noor LLC.

1. Would you support allowing yard waste, including leaves, grass, and tree trimmings in landfills if it is used to increase the production of renewable “green” energy?  
Yes – 86%      No – 7%      Don’t Know – 7%
2. Yard waste, such as leaves, grass, and tree trimmings can create two different resources, one being “green” energy, which is a renewable source of power that reduces dependence on fossil fuels and foreign oil, and the other being compost, which is a nutrient-rich soil additive. Which resource do you place a higher value on, compost or green energy?  
Green Energy – 60%      Compost – 26%      They are equal – 5%      Neither – 2%      Don’t Know – 8%